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A Conversation With Barry Goldwater

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WASHINGTON—A smile creases the craggy face of the veteran Senator when the legislative proposal aimed at preserving teen-age chastity comes up.

"How the hell are you going to preserve teen-age chastity?" he blurts out. "This has been going on since Adam and Eve and I don't know how old they were when they knocked that apple off. . . . Government can't stop promiscuity of teenagers."

This is the voice of the old conservative warhorse Barry Goldwater. He's discussing a proposal by two of the newer Republican conservative Senators, Orrin Hatch of Utah and Alabama's Jeremiah Denton, that is intended to curb teen-age promiscuity.

The Arizona Republican always has been salty and blunt. But his view on this seemingly peripheral issue also underscores the sharp rift between his brand of old-fashioned conservatism and that of the new right. Barry Goldwater accords very low priority to the so-called social issues—such as abortion and busing—that are the mainstay of the new right's position.

Thus he is viewed as a relic by many of the younger hard-core conservatives. Human Events, the weekly bible of the right, recently suggested the 72-year-old lawmaker "has all but tuned out of relevant conservative politics for years now." The new right direct-mail genius Richard Viguerie says conservatives owe Barry Goldwater a great debt "but nobody would suggest he's a conservative leader anymore."

Perhaps not, but these days Barry Goldwater's political juices are flowing more freely than at any time since his ill-fated 1964 presidential run. He's in the thick of the news, defending the nomination of his friend Sandra O'Connor to the Supreme Court, assailing the Moral Majority and other new right figures. And, as chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, he has been smack in the middle of the controversy over the fitness of William Casey to serve as CIA director.



Early last week the forthright and free-wheeling Mr. Goldwater offered his views on a variety of subjects. The following are excerpts from that conversation:

The new right: "I just dropped my subscription to Human Events last week, because I don't believe they represent true

conservatism. During some of my campaigns people said, 'Well, Goldwater isn't the old dog fighter he used to be.' I never thought you had to be a dog fighter to be a conservative and I disagree with Human Events on that. I also disagree with Viguerie whom I, by the way, helped get started. I lent him some of my fat-cat names so he could start building up his multimillion-dollar business.

"I've been a conservative all my life but I don't look upon conservatism as some

point that they will unite against the President or any Republican? But balancing that, I think, is that a growing number of people, of both liberal and conservative persuasion, realize that either we change our way of economic life or this country is going to cease to exist as we have known it."

Business: "The businessman has become far, far more liberal—without being willing to admit it—as a result of this growing dependence on the federal govern-

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"You might say busing is centralism, but it's neither centralism nor noncentralism. It was a vehicle that gave us a way to accomplish a decision of the Supreme Court. I don't like busing but not for any conservative reason. On the subject of abortion, I've been a member of the Right to Life group, which my wife raised hell with me about because she started Planned Parenthood in Arizona. But I've left the Right to Life group not because I don't continue to vote for most of their principles but (because) I don't think any group that organizes themselves solely for the purpose of a single issue can call themselves conservative.

"I worked hard against labor unions when they did the same thing back in the 1950s. They came here with millions of dollars representing millions of people and saying, 'you either vote our way, or we're going to get rid of you.' Now that's exactly what the Moral Majority is doing and what the Right to Life group is doing and, as a conservative, I find it every bit as distasteful."

Conservatism: "I don't think a conservative today is any different than a conservative has been since the days of the Greeks. We want to make progress on the proven values of the past. Our constitutional government is the finest thing ever devised by man. Why screw around with it? Our American free-market system has produced more goods for more people than all the other systems of the world put together. Now why should we follow Lord Keynes and go back to the days of socialism? In other words, don't fool around with things that don't work.

"A major factor today is that we have such a large percentage of our population living off the rest of the population. The question is: Will the Reagan economic policies turn out to hurt these people to the

ment for control, for literal handouts. You have to admit the managerial expertise in this country has gone down. You don't find the woods full of good managers any more.

"Business has become more a system of conglomerates that will make anything, any item and any different variety of items, with the sole idea being to make some money. Nobody has pride in what they're doing; they just want to show a little profit. Now there's nothing wrong with making money. But I think there's something to be said for a manufacturer learning how to make what he started out to make and doing it well."

The Reagan administration: "I think the President has done well so far. The only criticism I have is that he has been too slow in making some appointments. I think he's still short over 20 top appointments in the Defense Department.

"As for policy and people, I can't think of any reason to be upset. We've been talking a lot about a tough foreign policy and I think (Secretary of State) Haig has provided that. I think the Russians understand it. I wouldn't say that (Defense Secretary) Caspar Weinberger is the most knowledgeable military man available but, after all, he went from a private to a captain working for Gen. MacArthur and that's tough. There's a lot of screaming about (Deputy Defense Secretary) Carlucci, but he damn near got killed in the service of his country and probably saved Portugal for us. (Mr. Carlucci formerly served as ambassador to Portugal.)

"People criticize Jim Watt but he is a Westerner and the Department of Interior is nothing but the West. I think I could put every inch of ground that the department controls east of the Mississippi in this office. But in the West the Department of Interior owns the land, runs the land, takes money from our states and here we have a man (Watt) who knows the trouble.

"I approve of Reagan's spending and